



USAF Legislative Liaison Congressional Hearing Resume 106th Congress; Second Session

SUBJECT: Status of Forces / Readiness

COMMITTEE: Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC)

CHAIRMAN: The Honorable John Warner, R-VA

DATE: 27 Sep 00

MEMBERS PRESENT (bold face):

REPUBLICANS

Strom Thurmond (SC)
John McCain (AZ)
Bob Smith (NH)
James Inhofe (OK)
Rick Santorum (PA)
Olympia Snowe (ME)
Pat Roberts (KS)
Wayne Allard (CO)

Tim Hutchinson(AR)
Jeff Sessions (AL)

DEMOCRATS

Carl Levin (MI)
Edward Kennedy (MA)
Jeff Bingaman (NM)
Robert Byrd (WV)
Charles Robb (VA)
Joseph Lieberman (CT)
Max Cleland (GA)
Mary Landrieu (LA)
Jack Reed (RI)

WITNESSES:

- Gen Henry H. Shelton, USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)
- Gen Michael E. Ryan, Chief of Staff of U.S. Air Force (CSAF)
- Gen Erik K. Shinseki, Army Chief of Staff
- Adm Vernon E. Clark, Chief of Naval Operations
- Gen James L. Jones, Commandant of the Marine Corps

Information contained in this resume was obtained during an open hearing. It will not be released outside of Department of Defense agencies until published hearing transcripts have been released by the Committee, and only to the extent it is in accord with published hearing procedures.

Prepared by: Lt Col Keith Zuegel, SAF/LLZ, 703-695-6641 (DSN 225)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The committee met to discuss the Status of Forces/Readiness. Note: This was the third year in a row that a Readiness hearing was called by the SASC. Unlike the initial 29 Sep 98 SASC Readiness Hearing, this year's hearing was not nearly as contentious. Although most Members avoided direct discussion regarding the ongoing political campaigns, some Senators contrasted their major party's Presidential candidate with the other party's candidate. Most Members utilized their time asking direct questions of the witnesses. Almost all Members thanked the CJCS and service chiefs for appearing, for their candid testimony, and for their dedication to their service and country. The general feeling from both the Members and the Chiefs was that there is no doubt that the Armed Forces could conduct the National Military Strategy in support of the National Security Strategy. However, there was a general feeling among all that even though the "tip of the spear" (deployed) forces are ready for military operations, the "shaft" of the spear (CONUS/non-engaged forces) have readiness problems. Not one Member stated that the budget is too low or just about right. Most openly cited was the need for increased defense budgets. The service chiefs declared that the risk to their forces during the first MTW is moderate, the risk for the 2nd MTW is high. The service chiefs sent the message that budget topline have forced us to mortgage long-term readiness (and recapitalization and modernization) for short-term readiness fixes.

The hearing was called to order at 0905 by Senator Warner, CHMN.

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Warner

- Forward deployed troops are under highest state of readiness, but what are the consequences for the home-side units? Are they being "stripped down?"
- Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen are working around the clock; very old airplanes
- Q. Are we maintaining our current state of readiness?
- Q. Is this why we are struggling to meet readiness goals?
- Service chiefs are "Trustees" to those who wear the uniform
- In September (29) 1998, we had anecdotal evidence that our long-term readiness is in jeopardy
 - Candid testimony was key factor in turning around declining budgets
 - (What we received) fell short of what you said was necessary, but it broke the descent rate
- Displayed OPTEMPO chart--stated we are over tasked and over used; we are asking people in uniform to do more with less
- After Cold War, President Bush made decision to restructure for post-Cold War
 - In USSR's place we now have several threats
- Service chiefs have stated through their Unfunded Priority Lists (UPL) that they are \$18B short
- We are on the verge of providing health care for everyone--regardless of age

Sen Levin

- The question is important, "Can we fight and win our nation's wars?"
- Read SECDEF letter stating his successor will inherit a better force--even better than in Desert Storm. Lessons learned from Kosovo make this present day force better
- Readiness today is about same as in Jan 93

- Challenges of recruiting are due to good economy
- Accomplishments:
 - To add \$80B to departments
 - Largest pay increase in last 20 yrs
 - Administration proposed changes in targeted pay raises and a repeal in REDUX (retirement)
- Congress has responsibility as it holds purse strings after administrative proposals
- We maintain bases despite need for downsizing
- Congress adds projects to defense bills

WITNESS STATEMENTS

Gen Shelton, CJCS

- Quoted Gen Wickham--We've got the best military in the world...but ready for what?
- Capable of 2 major theater wars (MTWs), but risks have increased
- No other country could have done what we have done...Allied Force, Peacekeeping, etc.
- Some of our units are not as ready; parts of our force are strained
- High OPTEMPO is placing burden on troops & wearing out equipment faster
- More time & money spent maintaining old equipment
- Most of the extra money we've received since 1997 has gone to cover increased operations
- Examples of old equipment costing more--"Robbing Peter to pay Paul."
- After 3 yrs, \$60B has proved insufficient to cover extra procurement costs--continuous migration away from procurement
- Required level of sustaining our forces is greater than \$60B
- We have a great force, an overused force. Concerned about longer term readiness maintained by my successor
- We can't mortgage the future for short-term readiness

Gen Shinseki

- We have for years, mortgaged our modernization efforts
- 57 years old is standard revitalization of infrastructure; US Army's is 157 yrs

Adm Clark

- Forward-deployed forces are doing the job
- Non-deployed forces readiness is "less than it ought to be"

Gen Jones

- USMC is capable of executing wartime & peacetime responsibilities

Gen Ryan

- Our people have succeeded in every task we've given them
- Pay raises have helped
- Increased funding for readiness is needed
- Testified in Sep 98 that the USAF needed approx \$5B in increased funding for readiness
 - We received ½ of that amount
- Readiness has not gotten better; it's just stabilized somewhat

- Mission Capable (MC) rates have decreased 10% over last decade
- We struggle with our retention rate
- Our aircraft average age is 22 years old; in 15 years, the average age will be 30--EVEN with every modernization program we hope to buy
 - The USAF has never dealt with this before
- We have mortgaged our long-term readiness for short-term readiness
- Our infrastructure is on a 250-year replacement cycle

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS

Chairman Warner

- Not all Members were supportive of having this hearing
 - Opening statements of Chiefs have passed the test for candor
 - There is no doubt that today's armed forces can meet perform their missions, but risk is up
- A. **Gen Ryan**- Concurred. "It's the future I worry about."
- We have lived off the Reagan/Bush buildups
- Q. Do you recommend an increase in end strength?
- A. **CJCS**- Would be irresponsible to do so until we gather further review

Sen Levin

- Tried to differentiate points made by Sen Warner
- Identified decreases in defense budgets began under Pres Bush; changes began before 1993
- Agreed with Chiefs; we must increase spending--IF it goes to meet real defense needs
- No real difference between Administration's budget request and what Congress provided
- Congress insists we maintain infrastructure we don't need
- Congress puts money into budgets that Services don't need
- **For the Record**: Challenged service chiefs to look at 5-yr plan

Sen Warner

- BRAC is painful
 - In one round, Pres Clinton subverted the process injecting politics
 - I will be pressing BRAC with new Administration; #1 item on this CMTE

Sen Thurmond

- Cited Gen Foglesong's (AF/XO) testimony that combat readiness of front line units has fallen 23% since 1993

Sen Bingaman

- Even after fall of Berlin Wall, we still have approx 245,000 personnel overseas
- Q. Should we retire 50 Peacekeeper missile beginning this year?
- A. **Gen Ryan**-- Will take **For the Record**. It's approx \$150M/year. In the context of START II drawdown, it does not contribute to our national security at this point. STRATCOM CINC would need to advise if it should be taken down

Sen Sessions

- Q. Is it true that Congress met the President's budget request and has exceeded it?

A. **CJCS**--Yes.

- In Feb 00, SECDEF Cohen testified about the Peace Dividend. Stated, "We've been living off the Reagan buildup."

Q. Have we taken money from modernization, infrastructure, long-term readiness to fund readiness?

A. **CJCS**-- Yes. Increased use of forces increases the costs

A. **CNO**--Aging equipment is driving costs of maintaining current accounts

A. **Gen Ryan**--"I agree completely."

Sen Reed

Questioned CJCS if there is an increasing trend in (current) readiness (due to supplementals and parts arriving into bins)

- We're requiring services to buy equipment they don't want or equipment isn't even ready yet (F-22, CV-22)

-- **Gen Jones** interjected that IF we accelerate systems like the CV-22, it will decrease their overall costs

-- **Gen Ryan** replied that the USAF has a drastic problem with airlift, fighter force, tankers, ISR

-- **Adm Clark** stated he has to buy 160-170 aircraft/yr to maintain the QDR force

Sen Hutchinson

- Countered political points made by Sen Levin used to differentiate the political candidates

- Claimed readiness today is measurably lower than before

- Revision in how we define readiness to conduct their operations

- Asked **Gen Shinseki** about USA readiness classifications of 2 divisions during 1999

Sen Warner

Strongly objected to the injection of politics into the SASC discussions. Said he would avoid the campaign dialogue and asked Republicans to do the same

Sen Cleland

- Since 1989, cited watershed events of Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo

- After Gulf War, the thought was to decrease the size of the Armed Forces by 1/3

- Key question for the Services: Where do we go from here?

- It's up to the Services to readjust; be able to operate under asymmetric threats

- Agreed that an additional 1% (\$60B) of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is necessary

-- Increased deployments, inadequate defense budget

- **Gen Ryan**-- We must not only look to the past but to the future

-- Need to look at rapid deployment of forces

-- We need to ensure that our "kick down the door force" can do the job

Sen Inhofe

- Agreed with Sen Cleland that budget is too low

- Cited that through his numerous travels, is still amazed at the high morale of the forces

- Stated that there the disparity is \$126B in FYDP between the last year of Pres Bush and Pres Clinton

Sen Landrieu

- Supports increase in military spending
- Cited that at \$3-5B, the U.S. military budget is 5 times bigger than Russia's, 22 times bigger than the 7 countries identified as the U.S.' biggest threats. **Gen Ryan** countered that no other nation is asked to take on these other high threat nations
 - Defense budget utilizes 15 cents of every dollar we spend
 - We need to do a better job in our spending
- Q. Is there a strategic requirement to maintain the Peacekeeper force?
- A. **Gen Ryan**--We would like to take it down ASAP but will rely on the U.S. Senate, STRATCOM guidance
- Cited that CINCCENT talked about the diminishing training opportunities

Sen Roberts

- Cited SECDEF Cohen's comments that he instructed the Chiefs not to "bang the drum" or "hold out a tin cup" for extra defense dollars
- Presented a visual demonstration that a cup has limited space (limited resources), and when filled up with a great number of demands (TEMPO), the cup quickly 'runneth over'
- Tip of the Spear is fine. It's the shaft that he's worried about
- Q. Cited Mr. Gansler's description of a "death spiral" due to mortgaging other things for short-term readiness and lack of investment.
- A. **Adm Clark**-- Need topline relief otherwise something's got to give
- A. **Gen Ryan**-- Agree with other service chiefs (that we need increased topline). Concerned about people issues and addressing the needs of our people

Sen Robb

- Wanted CJCS to discuss health care

Sen Warner

- Interrupted to say that he wants health care for all retirees regardless of age
- Talked about Authorization Conference Report
 - Can't right now make it permanent (it's funded for only 2 years)
- Priorities of next Congress:
 1. BRAC
 2. Health care made permanent

Sen Robb

- Q. Do you have an endstrength personnel problem?
- A. **Gen Ryan**-- If we can improve retention it would help

Sen Santorum

- Looking for a topline budget increase
- A. **Gen Ryan**-- Agree generally with CBO assessment. Procurement is 1/2 of the problem
 - Need on the order of \$20-30B/yr

Sen Allard

- Report from Congressional Research Service (CRS):
 - From 1956-1993 we had 51 deployments

- From only 1993-end of 1999, we had 51 deployments
 - Our future readiness is at risk
 - **CJCS** agreed
 - Asked **CJCS** about anthrax program. Saw need for it as a former veterinarian
 - Comment that he heard many negative readiness comments made throughout the hearing
- Q. Should we accept the risks of performing the current National Security Strategy or do something about it? Wants to know if Chiefs think we need a change

Sen Smith

- Noted morale is good
- Concern about readiness
- Thought there were many cover-ups out in the field
 - **Gen Ryan**-- We have to stand up for our people. But we also have to stand up for the commanders who stand up for our people

TASKINGS

Inserts for the Record (IFRs) identified above in **bold, underlined, italicized font**. To be tasked out in separate correspondence

The hearing concluded at 1248.